



## Naval Officer Candidate School Drill Instructor named best Marine of 2008



A female drill instructor aboard Naval Station Newport, Newport, Rhode Island was honored with the inaugural Naval Service Training Command (NSTC) Marine of the Year (MOY) award at a ceremony on 1 April, 2009.

Gunnery Sergeant Sandra N. Center, Officer Candidate School Class Drill Instructor, Officer Training Command Newport received this special recognition and was presented a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal by RDML Clifford Sharpe, NSTC Commander.

The Naval Service Training Command Marine of the Year Award recognizes the one Marine who best represents the large number of dedicated professionals within the NSTC domain. Sustained superior performance, proven leadership, self-improvement, command and community involvement, self-expression, military bearing and appearance are all key facets of the best all around Marine. When reviewing candidates, special considerations were given to those Marines who excelled in increasingly demanding and challenging assignments.

Gunnery Sergeant Center, a Scottsdale, Arizona native, is only the second female drill instructor to serve at Naval Officer Candidate School in an incredible 62 year span when in 1947, Marine Corps Drill Instructors began to train Naval Officer Candidates.

Gunnery Sergeant Center has had many outstanding accomplishments throughout her Marine Corps career. Upon graduation from Drill Instructor School in July 2002, she was assigned to Oscar and Papa Company, Fourth Recruit Training Battalion, MCRD Parris Island, SC where she served as a Drill Instructor, Senior Drill Instructor, and Series Gunnery Sergeant. She also served as a Close Combat Instructor at the Instructional Training Company and was a 2002 graduate of the Black Belt Marine Corps Martial Arts Instructor Course.

There are nine Drill Instructors at Naval Officer Candidate School. These Marines are hand-picked, seasoned second tour Drill Instructors, that militarize, mentor and train candidates through a grueling 12 week mental and physical program. Each Drill Instructor is paired with a Navy Lieutenant and a Navy Chief Petty Officer, these three members represent a Class Team that is charged with training the candidates. The current Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, Sergeant Major Carlton W. Kent was a Class Drill Instructor and Chief Drill Instructor at Naval Aviation Officer Candidates School when it resided in Pensacola, Florida.

At Naval Officer Candidate School, Gunnery Sergeant Center has been a tireless and dedicated mentor and Drill Instructor. She was the Marine Drill Instructor Detachments nomination for the Rhode Island 2008 Military Woman of the Year, a finalist for the Navy League Captain Winifred Quick Collins Award for Inspirational Leadership and also a finalist for the 2008 National Women's History Month Military Trailblazer Award. Through her personal initiative and sustained superior performance, she has made a lasting contribution to Officer Training Command Newport and has been instrumental in the development of over 250 newly commissioned officers. "She is exactly the type of Marine we want to embody the ethos of 'Navy Owned, Marine Corps Trained'," said Master Gunnery Sergeant Brian Foshee, the Chief Drill Instructor at Officer Training Command Newport.

Before she began her tour here, Gunnery Sergeant Center served at Marine Wing Headquarters Squadron 3 in Miramar, CA where she served in the billets of G-1 Plans Chief and Assistant Staff Secretary for the Commanding General of the Third Marine Aircraft Wing.



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